

Rajiv's Visit Punjab Remains Punjab

By K.S. Khosla

Neither the announcement about the clearance of the Pepsico project nor the release of 137 detenus from Jodhpur jail on the eve of the Prime Minister's visit to Punjab nor his announcement of holding panchayat elections and his plan to call an all-party meeting to end the stalemate have raised hopes of early settlement of the Punjab problem.

Except his own party, from which loyalty is to be expected, no other political party is convinced of the Prime Minister's sincerity and purpose. Mr Surjit Singh Barnala, Akali leader and former Chief Minister, has said that the Jodhpur detenus should not be treated as hostages to be used as and when necessary to create goodwill among the Sikhs. Mr Barnala stated that the Prime Minister failed to measure up to high hopes



generated by the media among the people. The Prime Minister also failed to announce the strategy, much trumpeted by the Governor, Mr S.S. Ray, to solve the problem. Mr Barnala regretted that the Prime Minister also failed to announce any healing touch to the wounds of the Sikh psyche or taking action against the culprits of the Delhi killings in 1984.

As regards the Prime Minister's remarks that after the death of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal there was no one among the Akalis of his stature to whom they could talk to, Mr Barnala said that only a few months before his dismissal, he was praised by the Prime Minister as well as the Parliament for his secularism and courage in fighting terrorism but then suddenly he became persona

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The Sessions Court of Delhi and the three judge bench of the Delhi High Court had sentenced Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh to be hanged in the Indira Gandhi, assassination case on August 3rd. The three judges of the Supreme Court, G.L. Ojah, B.C. Rai and K.J. Shetty gave unanimous verdict and acquitted Balbir Singh after declaring him not guilty. The question is not of

"I Was Innocent"

Balbir Singh Tells Sandeep

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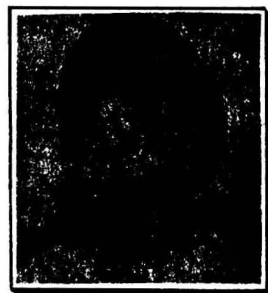
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acquittal of an accused. The sharp edged comment by the Supreme Court about the Sessions and High Court judgement raises many questions about the understanding and the work process of our judiciary. The three judges of the Supreme Court unanimously reversed the conviction of Balbir Singh. The judges were convinced that the police failed miserably to prove their contention that Balbir Singh was a part of the assassination conspiracy. He was arrested on 3rd December 1984 at Najafgarh in Delhi. The crucial evidence—a paper supposedly found in his pocket—was found totally fabricated.



Justice Ojah while commenting on the intelligence of the High Court judges said that this is very unfortunate that these judges have arrived at the conclusion that Balbir Singh knew Beant Singh and Satwant Singh but had failed to produce a single proof to confirm this conclusion. He also said that even

Additional Solicitor General or the Municipal Corporation who were the public prosecutors, failed to produce any proof to confirm the conclusions arrived at by the High Court.

Justice Ojah also said that one argument offered in the judgement of the High Court is that Balbir Singh is a Sikh. But the fact that Balbir Singh is a Sikh cannot be held as a proof that he was a part of the assassination conspiracy, or that he knew Beant Singh—Satwant Singh. A large number of Sikh officials worked at the residence of the Prime Minister. The fact that Balbir Singh had become excitable and used to say that he held Mrs Gandhi responsible

for the desecration of the Golden Temple during "Operation Blue Star" earlier that year and that people will take revenge does not mean that he wanted to conspire along with Beant Singh and take revenge.

Justice Ojah has, in his judgement written, that if the expression of anger or protest against Operation Blue Star by the accused (Balbir Singh) is used as a proof then all those who were excited or angry about the Operation Blue Star should be considered co-conspirators.

Supreme Court's judgement has created confidence among the people in the remains of the

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Letters

Religious To Be Political

Mr. Satyapal Dang's contention that the Akalis' walkout from Parliament on August 10 in protest against the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, was illogical is itself an illogical statement. The Bill does not affect anyone except the Sikhs. The sympathetic walkout could only be expected from those who have faith in Sikhism or have basic knowledge of its working. The main point to be noted is that the acceptance of the Bill by a Sikh would be against the dictates of the Gurus who kept religion and politics together to make a base for the Sikh way of life.

Those who keep in view this basic difference between the Sikh way of life and that of other communities would not misunderstand the Sikh or Akali point of view. However, from a Communist one cannot expect any cooperation, as his ideological approach to life is different from that of a Sikh. The Sikhs accept the authority of only Akalpurakh (God) and not of any Stalin.

There is no doubt that all Sikhs would agree to any action which would uproot terrorism and prevent the entry of illegal arms/ammunition/explosives, etc., and harbouring of accused persons, in any religious institution. But, how can this requirement demand that religion and politics must be separated? Should the writ of today's politicians who can compromise on any principle and sacrifice the national interest for petty gains, run in both the domains of the citizens' lives and faith? It must be remembered that in Indian society religion plays a major role to ensure for everyone a clean and contented life.

The Bill is both mischievous and partisan. The most dangerous clause is 2(d) pertaining to "political activities". The Sikh way of life is based on very firm secular and

democratic principles of "sangat" and "pangat", langar, Sarbat Khalsa and Sant Sipahi and the institution of Akal Takht. This Bill runs counter to the total Sikh way of life. It needs to be noted that all political, religious, social, cultural, educational and economic matters are discussed in detail and deliberated at the sangat (daily Sikh congregation in gurdwaras) and only then resolutions are passed or decisions taken which become general guidelines for the local Sikh community.

But under this Bill all those constituting the sangat could be charged against and proceeded against. The guiding rule should be that any person taking part in anti-national matters or activities will be or could be arrested irrespective of place, whether a public park, Parliament, club house or a religious institution. The Government endeavour should be to educate the people about the values of democracy and secularism, and mould their minds against anti-national activities. Separating religion from politics is a futile and dangerous exercise.

Finally, it must be noted with concern by all who are determining the destiny of the country that this Bill, if made operative, would mean closing of the institution of Sri Akal Takht Sahib.

Lt-Col Manohar Singh (Retd)
New Delhi

The Religious Institutions Bill, 1988

The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, 1988, which has been passed by the Indian Parliament gravely runs counter to the Sikh way of life. The Sikh institution of 'sadh-sangat' which means that all devotees unite under a bond and form a pure, pious and an integrated social congregation under one roof has been a revolutionary institution. It establishes one of the fundamentals of the social milieu as it removes all the distinctions of caste, creed, race and sex. As such it truly establishes the concept of a common brotherhood of all mankind.

The second Sikh institution of 'Guru ka Langar' free community kitchen, cements the above concept as it is open to all and served to all irrespective of caste, creed, religion, region or social status. This institution was started by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, and continued by his successors. It has been a powerful means for the uplift of the downtrodden who had been groaning under the yoke of socio-economic-cum-political inequalities and religious discriminations prevalent in a society. It has also been a crusade against the social injustice, oppression and tyranny of the caste system.

These two Sikh institutions have attracted attention of everybody in the world and they are said to be the biggest contribution of Sikhism towards integration of Indian society. Most Sikh Gurdwaras besides ruining 'langar' also provide free accommodation to anyone and a management of a Gurdwara cannot refuse these services to

anyone. It has no means to screen anyone but under the newly introduced Religious Institutions Bill, 1988, it can be held guilty if any anti-national or anti-social person happens to be accommodated in a Gurdwara or partakes of 'langar' there.

The rise and growth of Sikhism, to a great extent, has been a measure of a sharp reaction against the water tight division of Indian society. All Sikh Gurus have not only been "revolutionary religious leaders" but they were also great social reformers and they had served a great social need of the time. To them the social aspect of Indian life called for urgent attention because it was most unsatisfactory.

All Sikhs feel that the passage of Religious Institutions Bill, 1988, is unjustified and it is an unwarranted blow to Sikh way of life which has been based on full secular and democratic principles.

The Indian government, by its new legislative measure, as such, is cutting at the roots of the way of life of a Sikh.

New Delhi Dr Arvinder Singh

Sound And Fury

The Congress freed the country from colonial rule and now the time has come to free the country from Congress (I) misrule.
- Mr N.T. Rama Rao.

I don't know who has formed the Samajvadi Janata Dal. SJD does not exist for me.
- Mr Chandra Shekhar.

I don't know why God should punish us like this.
- President Ershad.

Bangladesh is being destroyed by its neighbours.
- Mr B.N. Abbas, former Bangladesh Minister for Flood Control.

I do not think we are going towards the 21st century
- Mr Devi Lal.

He (Mr Devi Lal) hails journalists in Delhi as champions of democracy and denounces them as blackmailers in Haryana
- Mr D.R. Chaudhry, editor of Peeng.

The issue of defamation remains.
- Mr Rajiv Gandhi, after announcing that the Defamation Bill would be dropped.

(The Prime Minister) takes a very long time to make up his mind
- Mr Somnath Chatterjee in Aajkaal.

On the procedure to murdering democracy, whether by rope or by electric chair or by cyanide?
- Mr V.P. Singh on why the Government wants a dialogue on the Defamation Bill.

Can any person of distinction deny that he or she was not defamed or blackmailed at one or the other time in his life not by the Press, but...by a section of the Press... yellow journalists.
- Mr S. Krishna Kumar, Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting.

Rajiv Gandhi gives big speeches on apartheid, statements that Graham Gooch will not be allowed into India, but neither he nor other MPs have taken action on the Harijan issue.
- Swami Agnivesh.

I want to go with the flow of the nation
- Mr Bijoy Hrang Khawl

I have to become an outlaw once again with a price on my head
- Mr Laldenga.

If a Central Minister has to lay down his life to prove that law and order had ceased to exist in the State, I will not hesitate to do so.
- Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi.

Communists never flee from the battlefield, they fight with all their might till the last.
- Mr Jyoti Basu

If religion is properly understood, no country will need to separate it from politics.
- Mr Darshan Singh Ragi in The Sunday Observer.

Jesus loves democracy.
- Placard carried by Burmese nuns.

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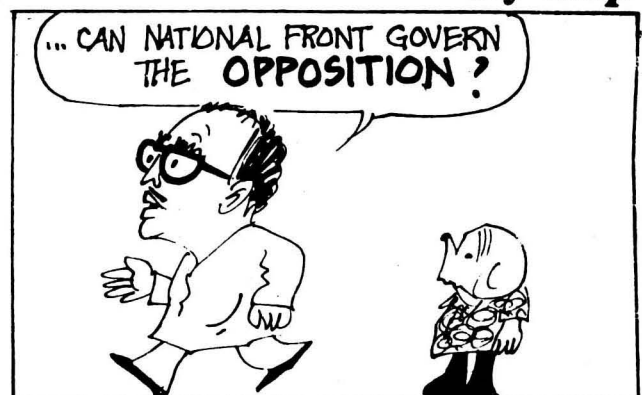
Publishers
Ekta Trust
2/26, Sarva Priya Vihar
New Delhi-110016
Ph. 660738

Editorial, Business
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3, Masjid Road, Jangpura
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NEWSHOUND



By Rap



The
FORUM
Gazette

■ Minority Rights
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Bidar: Venue For Taking Political Advantages

The decision of the Prime Minister to send a high-powered party team to Bidar to enquire into the sequence and causes of riots and to restore confidence in the minority community would have been considered a welcome and necessary action had it come from a meaningful government with clean intentions. Unfortunately, it is not so in this case. The only reason for sending such a delegation seems to be that Karnataka is a non-Congress party ruling state. All indications are that the so-called high-powered delegation will come out with reports pointing out failure of Janata government in preventing the events.

Our purpose here is not to defend the Janata or any other government. Any administration that fails to perform its basic duty of preventing the life and property of citizens either by its acts of omission or commission must be taken to task. Our contention here is the credibility and legitimacy of the party-delegation which itself has to clear so many allegations.

Why no Congress delegation has been appointed or sent to enquire into incidents in Delhi and elsewhere particularly in Congress ruled states in 1984 and afterwards? If non-governmental bodies are competent enough to conduct meaningful enquiries, which we feel are, then why government has not taken any cognizance of enquiries conducted by PUCL-PUDP, Citizen's Justice Committee and other independent bodies that conducted quite objective and fair enquiries into the November 1984 riots? And if government feels that non-governmental bodies are not competent to conduct such enquiries then what is the purpose of sending a Congress-party delegation?

Most important question is how serious government is in punishing guilty in general and guilty with a particular party colour in particular. It is no secret that after November 1984 riots the government did not even appoint a commission to enquire. Only after a lapse of about an year the Mishra Commission was appointed that, too, half-heartedly and with so many riders. Furthermore, after the report of the Mishra Commission, which itself was considered a white-washing task by all fair minded people, government's attitude has been either lukewarm or negative on whatever little recommendations the commission made. Its dealing with the Jain-Banerjee Committee is a pointer in this direction.

Jain-Banerjee Committee directed the registration of a case against one of the party functionaries, ex-MP, Mr Sajjan Kumar. Not only these directions were not complied with but a stay obtained from High Court on further functioning of the committee lest it may raise its fingers against more party functionaries. Till today the government has shown no serious or meaningful intention to punish the guilty of 1984 riots.

With such a record what purpose or intentions the party can have in sending a delegation to Bidar? Isn't it a case of mere politicisation? A government which has been insensitive to the point of callousness about deaths in Delhi, in Punjab and elsewhere, about the massacres in Bihar and Meerut has suddenly woken up to the political opportunity that the killings in Bidar present for scoring a debating point or two against an opposition government.

Needless to say that working and functioning of new Bommai led Janata government in Karnataka has to be watched. There can be no two opinions about the fact that the local administration in Bidar reacted all too slowly to the tension and actual events. While the blame for the riot must wait until the Judicial enquiry ordered by the State government is completed the State Government must do all to win the confidence of the minority. First and most important step for that is creation of conditions in which classes at the engineering college commence thereby preventing the threatened loss of year for students. The government must get the college building repaired on its own and provide suitable and safe accommodation for students.

More important is political initiative. The Janata government must make effective use of administrative and party machinery to recreate conditions of mutual trust and comradeship in which Hindus and Sikhs have lived in Bidar for centuries.

Thought For Fortnight

Why is it that we rejoice of a birth and grieve at a funeral? Is it because we are not the person concerned?

Mark Twain

Living Together For Harmony

By Bhagwant Singh Dalawari

In devotion to my Guru, Guru Granth Sahib, I wonder what exactly living together means for my Master, i.e. my perpetual Guru, is the very embodiment of living together. I wonder whether most of you know that Muslims, Hindus, the so-called untouchable saints, cry out loudly from one platform in equality with Sikh Guru from Guru Granth Sahib about the purity and righteousness as the main ingredients of any spiritual experience. If the Christians say "Kingdom of God is Within You", the Sikh is proud of remembering *Sab Kuch Ghar Mein Bahar Nahin* (everything is within, nothing outside). In any case, when I adhere to the instructions contained in my Scripture-Guru, I marvel at the majesty with which people of different religions openly advocating their methods of prayers like Namaz, Puja, etc. instill in my heart equality of all religions, equality of all prophets, equality of all human beings and oneness of God.

I wonder - and I wonder most curiously - why we are not able to consider all human beings as our brothers and sisters, why we are not able to promote peace, love, unity national integration and universal brotherhood. Why don't we understand that the diversity of different religious traditions is the beauty of religious purity. The true religious person cannot have but respect for all religious traditions and will never consider any tradition lower than his own. Gandhiji, with whom I agree, used to say that one cannot respect one's own religion without respecting other religions. Indeed if the spirit is one and comes from the same God, this very spirit must have been working in the form of Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Rama, Krishna, Nanak and other prophets. Anyone who believes otherwise cannot let the light of one God enter his own psyche. Indeed religion which has no humanity, no Love, no Truth and no Service of Fellow-man is an empty religious label. On the other hand, if all religions have these essential attributes, where is the argument to understand whether one believes in *karmas*, re-incarnation and so on. In my view living in actual day to-day life the fury of one's master with the presence of god as one's ideal, automatically leads to unity of mankind. Those who cannot experience this or cannot conceive this, I am quite certain, do not know their own religion.

I would not say that promotion of peace and love are the need of the time Today alone; they are and have been the need of all times but we have been foolish at all times.

Since we have not been able to imbibe the true meaning of the dictates of our own Masters, we have been hiding our own failures by attacking other religions and parading our own religion as superior, sometimes even knowing, that we are men of straw. I cannot even conceive that we, all human beings, can be different from one another. No Christian would feel less hurt by the cut of a knife than a Sikh and no Muslim will feel less harmed by the onslaught of a dacoit - even if the assaulter or dacoit is of the same religion.

Religion is certainly a unifying factor but those of us who have no respect for our own religion instead of understanding its message have undertaken to parade its external symbols with a sense of superiority and have been considering people of other religions as less equal or other prophets as less equal than ours. Why is this foolishness still prevalent I do not know, but I believe that our refusal to live our own religion contributes to this.

Whether it is the holy Quran or the holy Bible or Guru Granth Sahib, Ramayana or Gita, I am quite clear that their message is the same as that of lifting the humanity from its degradation into a position of diving symbol. What difference does it make whether one becomes a divine symbol through Mohammed or Christ or Nanak? What matters is that human beings genuinely rejoice in their common heritage. I am proud of believing that I am not only a Sikh, I belong to all religions and anyone who lives in the presence of the Lord, believes in Truth and Purity, is my co-religionist. I, therefore, insist that I do not represent Sikh religion alone. Like Guru Granth Sahib having galaxy of saints, I as the disciple, am supposed to contain the purity of all Gurus, all Pirs, Sab Gur Pir hamare, says Guru Granth Sahib. Meaning "all Gurus and Pirs are mine".

By way of full understanding, once I played with my prayer-companions with the writings of a Muslim saint as in Guru Granth Sahib and intentionally I asked my companions to tell me which Guru or which saint in Guru Granth Sahib had said that, while I read to them from the Weekly. Invariably the answers were the names of one Guru or saint. After an exercise of about 15 minutes, I said, "My brothers and sisters, they are from a present Muslim saint."

When I was studying leprosy in Christian Medical College, Vellore,

after God had decided to let me leave my job, I used to go to the college Church and the hymns sung there reflected the same meanings as in the hymns in Guru Granth Sahib. Once a Father sent to me the New Testament and as I browsed through it, I came across innumerable passages saying the things I had learnt from Guru Granth Sahib.

But, let me make it clear, the gatherings to make living together possible, paper-readings and polite inter-religious talks can contribute only partially to the attainment of peace within or out. The real problem is about dealing with the mighty onslaughts that we have in terms of greed, hatred, backbiting, jealousy, sexual monstrosity, anger, attachment and vanity. These monsters do not let us in peace even with our own family members like wife, husband, brother, sister, son and daughter. The real need is to learn one's own religious dictates and live them in day-to-day life vis-a-vis others. Indeed they can be lived only with God's grace. But if that becomes possible, living together would be automatic.

I have lived in different Christian countries, a Muslim country, an African country, in China and I have visited a number of other countries. Never, never in my life have I felt a stranger although my outer appearance as a Sikh brings me out. The simplest reason is that God has, through His infinite mercy, kept close to me the instruction of Guru Granth Sahib:

- I have no enemies; nor am I opposed to anyone. God is within me with the light of my Guru. I have made everyone my friend and have become the friend of everyone.

- All created the light and all human beings came out of that light. How can then one be good and other bad.

- Do good to the bad. Those who give you blows, do not retaliate. Go and touch the feet of such people.

With such clear instructions and my need and urge to live these instructions to the fullest extent possible, I yearn for the perpetual grace to treat everyone as my kith and kin and that is how the 1500 people in my Leprosy Centre look to me, although none of them is a Sikh or a Punjabi.

I Was Innocent

Continued from page 1

Judiciary of this country. It has also proved that the decisions given by Session Courts and High Courts are under pressure from powers that be or are given after giving due consideration to the tempting offers. It does not speak very highly of their understanding of the law.

From this point of view Balbir Singh's case is of historical importance. Here we present an interview with Balbir Singh—sentenced to be hanged by Session and High court but acquitted by Supreme Court who found him completely innocent. Talking to him is *Sanchetna's* representative Sandeep.

Why did they try to implicate you in the Indira Gandhi assassination case?

Madam was murdered on 31st October 1984. I was at home that day because I had been on night duty. I was on duty on 30th October at Madam's residence, Number One, Akhbar Road, from seven in the evening to 12.45 a.m. and went out to buy milk and vegetables. That day the radio was broadcasting a commentary on the One-day Cricket Match between India and Pakistan. While I was listening to the commentary at around eleven, I heard that Indira Gandhi has been attacked and her security guards were responsible for the shooting. Till that moment I had no knowledge of this.

You must have felt shocked, because you were on duty the previous night, and you knew Beant and Satwant?

Yes, I was shocked. But they did not say who the guards were. In fact I did not know Satwant at all because he was from the Delhi Armoured Police. I knew Beant Singh because he was from the security unit.

When were you arrested?

I was on night duty at the Prime Minister's residence for one week. Therefore on 31st October I went to Number One Safdarjung Lane at 5 p.m. I had to pick up my pay packet and also make enquiries about my duty. We were informed that pay is not being disbursed. Besides, all Sikh officers had been asked to report to the security lines at Copernicus Marg. Sub Inspector Surjit Singh and myself scootered down to the Security Lines. We stayed there till eight O'clock. We were asked to come back in the morning. I returned to my government quarter. At 4.30 in the morning A.S.P. Tekchand of the Delhi crime branch, and a posse of police along with Sub Inspector Mahipal Singh came to my house. By this time the whole world knew that Indira Gandhi had been assassinated by her two Sikh guards. The police searched my house. Coincidentally, I had bought a

book by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale a few days back, out of curiosity. The police confiscated the book and asked me to accompany them. The police took me to the Yamuna Velodrome. The officials of the Secret Service department questioned me. Repeatedly they asked me about my relationship with Beant and Satwant. Also, what I knew about the assassination. I was taken to the Red fort a few days later. I was kept in the interrogation chamber till 3rd December. They continued questioning me.

This means that the story of catching you at a bus stop is a lie?

Yes, that was a bogus, and a fabricated story—a lie.

What happened after the police forced you to name Simranjeet Singh Maan, Jagjit Singh Chauhan and Harinder Singh?

When I agreed to name them these people were elated. On 6th December I was taken to Vigyan Bhawan where they made me write a confessional statement, a leave application from 1st November to 5th December. This is where they went wrong. On 5th December I was shown on leave and I was supposed to have been arrested on 3rd December.

What happened after they thought they can depend on you?

This was a battle between two snakes, I was also a police officer. I knew everything. They were playing their game and I was saving myself.

The police said that when you were arrested on 3rd December they found a paper in your pocket. What was that?

I was forced into writing this note in the Red Fort. I knew that they were trying to implicate me, but I was helpless. I had lost everything. I could not see the sky, I was deprived of fresh air. All I had was a prison cell. There was no difference between life and death. It was meaningless to think or not to think.

The judgement of Sessions Judge, Mahesh Chandra, came on 22nd January. What were the pressures put on you during these thirteen months?

I was kept in a cell where light and fresh air became a dream.

You are a graduate. Were you given the 'B grade' facilities?

We did not even get 'C-grade' facilities. I would say that wild animals are given much better facilities.

After the Supreme Court Judgement don't you feel that the Judgements of the two earlier Courts were malafide?

Not only were they malafide and unfair, I would say that the Judges did not behave like Judges. A Judge is a representative of God Almighty. He is not an ordinary man. Justice is truth. Judges

should behave like God.

The funny part of the story is that after the Sessions Court Judgement Sessions Judge Mahesh Chandra was appointed a Judge in the High Court.

After being released from the Jail your first comment was "Justice is still alive in this Country". Is it true?

Justice, Law, Truth was dying in India. But the Supreme Court Bench has granted a new lease of life to these elements. Everyday the police prepares false cases. People are killed in false encounters. I have seen people dying in police custody. I have seen my colleagues inflicting such tortures.

You have gone through pain, torture, insults for four years. What is the compensation you expect for this? Will you fight for it?

The stigma has been washed away, this, to my mind, is my compensation. I can never get these four years back, during this period my family has been tormented by the society, they went through a lot of difficulties, face many problems.

What do you think about the role of the Press?

The attitude of all the newspapers was not correct yet I have nothing against the press, because they are fed by the government. One newspaper went so far as to say that Beant Singh and

Balbir Singh are well known terrorists of Punjab. The fact is that I have not gone to Punjab for the past ten years.

You have spent four years in jail. Do you find any change in yourself?

Yes, I have changed. I read Guruvani, Geeta and the Bible in the prison. After reading these I came to the conclusion that a clean, honest, selfless lifestyle is the ideal way to live.

Will you accept to rejoin your service if the government offers your job to you?

No. Now I cannot serve the Police. In India you have to be a slave if you are serving the Police. The general public might be over-awed by the police but the government does not respect its police force. Today's government is using the police for its selfish purposes not for the good of the public. Today political leaders use the police to save their chairs, just as the British government did it to run its show.

Are you angry with the government?

Yes, I have my complaints. The Congress rule is not beneficial for this country. All the Congressmen are power hungry. No one joins the Congress to serve the nation. Only Mahatma Gandhi was different.

There is a lot of talk about opposition alliance. What do you think about them?

Some of the opposition leaders truly want unity. They want to overthrow the corrupt congress. I feel that the common man also wants to do the same.

What do you think about your future?

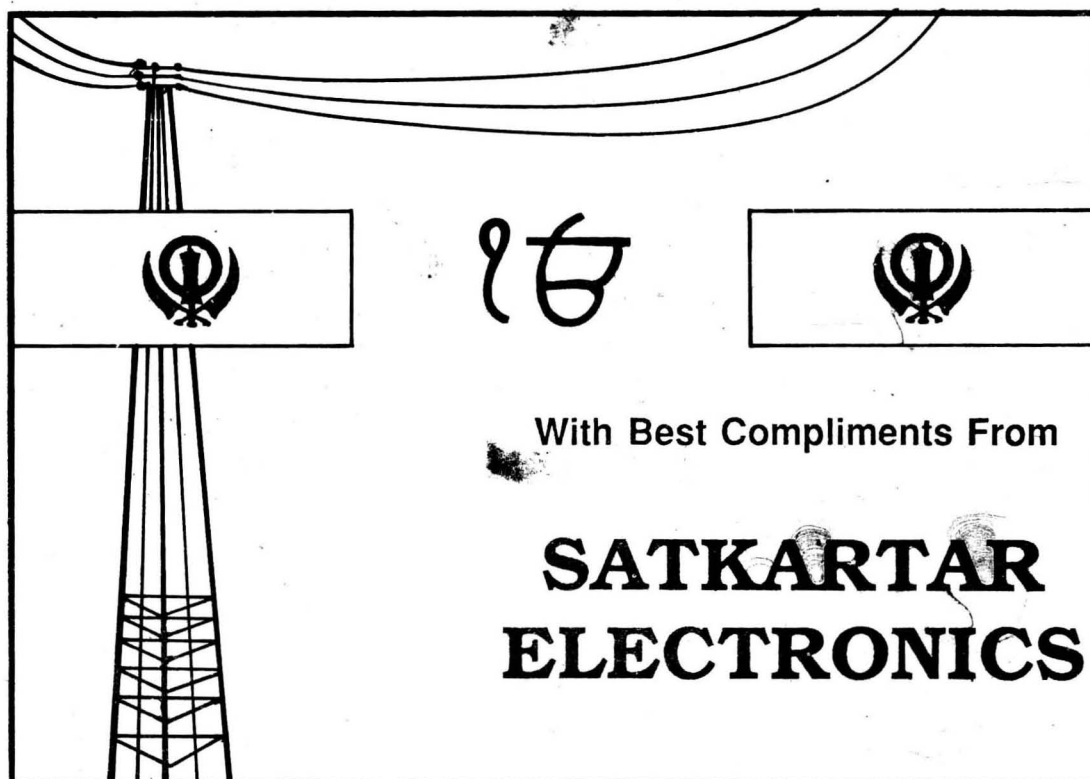
I have given no thought to this. May be I will take a decision after a month or two. I took one decision in my life and joined the police. I became a Sub-Inspector. But I have wasted eighteen years of my life in this service.

Now you have been acquitted. What is the behaviour of your neighbours?

Nothing succeeds like success. A large number of people came to my house to congratulate me. Some of these people had attacked my home during the November '84 riots. Some of my friends and relatives have yet to visit me, they are so scared of the government. Till a few days ago I was considered a murderer today I am a free citizen.

Will you write about your prison days and your experiences?

I read a lot and did a lot of thinking. If I get an opportunity I will write about my experience.



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He Was A Movement

K.K. Khullar on Shaheed Bhagat Singh on the occasion of the birth anniversary (September 27) of the greatest son of India.



'May I be reborn
and serve my
Motherland again'

students. Bhagat Singh gained admission in the college in the first year Arts. It is from this college he passed his FA examination in 1922 but had to give up studies in BA over his marriage issue.

At this college he had the privilege of teachers such as Prof. Vidyalkar whose teaching of history thrilled him. Here he also met Prof. Tirath Ram, Sukh Dev, Bhagwati Charan and other great revolutionaries. The Hindi writer and freedom fighter Yashpal, who provided valuable information about Bhagat Singh's college life also came into his contact at this college. Prof. Vidyalkar, however, became Bhagat Singh's political Guru and it was he who introduced him to revolutionaries in Aligarh, Agra and Kanpur. It is often said that if Bhagat Singh had not taken to revolutionary activities he would have been a great scholar.

Service To Motherland

Bhagat Singh was forced to leave his college on the question of his proposed marriage. But before leaving the home and the college he wrote to his father, "I dedicate my life to the lofty goal of service to the Motherland. Hence there is no attraction in me for home and fulfilment of worldly desires".

Before parting with his friends at Lahore he said: "Friends, I tell you today that if my marriage takes place in the slave India, my bride shall be only death. The Bharat will take the form of funeral procession and the Bharatis will be the martyrs of the country".

This was a turning point in his life. Bhagat Singh had entered the 15th year of his life. After leaving Lahore, he went to Kanpur. At Kanpur he stayed in the Boarding House under the name of Balwant Singh, learnt Bengali from Natilshwar Dutta, another revolutionary inmate of the hostel. During his stay here he devoted himself to the study of Karl Marx. There were riots in Delhi and it was decided to send Bhagat Singh as correspondent of Hindi 'Partap' to get the first hand information, a job which Bhagat Singh did with marvellous alacrity and precision.

During his stay at Kanpur, Bhagat Singh had become a member of Hindustan Republican Association formed by the revolutionaries of UP whose objective was to establish a united state of India by an organised and armed revolution. The basic principle of the Republic was the universal suffrage and the abolition of all systems which make any kind of exploitation of man by man possible. Through this Association he had come in contact with revolutionaries like Batukeshwar Butt,

Chandrashekhar Azad and Bejoy Kumar Singh. At Lahore he remained in constant touch with UP comrades but also established contacts with Kirti Kisan Party founded by Sohan Singh Josh. This organisation had an organ called 'Kirti' an Urdu magazine to which Bhagat Singh contributed a number of articles. In March 1926, he started a new organisation called 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha' which stood for popularising swadeshi goods, physical fitness and development of Indian languages and culture. In no time the Sabha at establishment of independent Republic of labourers and peasants of the whole of India: It also stood for infusing a spirit of patriotism in the hearts of the youths of the country in order to establish a united Indian nation. It is evident that Bhagat Singh had an economic vision based on social justice. The Sabha had links with Kirti Kisan Party and the Hindustan Republican Association.

In 1927, Bhagat Singh was falsely implicated in what is called the Dussehra Bomb Case and was arrested. Actually the bomb was thrown by a miscreant on the festival procession of the Hindus and Bhagat Singh had nothing to do with it. Besides, the revolutionaries did not believe in this kind of work. The police wanted a riot to nab some of the revolutionaries. The trick, however, failed and Bhagat Singh had to be released.

A meeting of the Hindustan Republic Association was held at Delhi in September, 1928, where representatives from UP, Rajasthan, Punjab and West Bengal attended. In all 60 revolutionaries and five women attended the meeting. It was here that the new programme of the party was adopted. It was here that it was decided to have socialism as the goal of India and that the government in independent India will be modelled on socialistic principles.

It was here that a new cell called the Hindustan Republican Army was created and Chandrashekhar Azad was appointed its commander-in-chief. It was here that it was decided to boycott the Simon Commission.

Boycott Of Simon Commission

Bhagat Singh now entered a new phase of his life by openly boycotting the Simon Commission and arranged agitations and meetings against its recommendations. The British Government had appointed a seven member commission—all white—to visit India and make recommendations in respect of constitutional reform. Since there was not a single Indian included in the Commission all parties decided to greet it with black flags with the banners 'Go Back, Simon'. The Lahore revolutionaries had a public wing in the Naujawan Bharat Sabha. They decided to participate in the demonstration against the Commission on October 30, 1928. In fact at Lahore the demonstration and the strike was mostly arranged by the Sabha. According to eye witness accounts the entire Lahore wore black on that day. Even women and children joined in great numbers. The entire movement that day was led by Lala Lajpat Rai popularly known as the Lion of Punjab. It was a large crowd and police was unable to control it. It was the thickest where the members of the Commission were scheduled to pass. There was commotion everywhere.

The police resorted to a mild lathi-charge first in order to disperse the crowd. It had no effect on the youths who stood in their positions like rocks. J.A. Scott, the Superintendent of the Police, J.P.

Continued on page 8

What was Bhagat Singh's political ideology and his socio-economic plan of action included the establishment of a sovereign republic of Indian proletariat and peasantry, to inculcate the spirit of patriotism among the youth and to encourage secular forces in the country.

"Bhagat Singh did not become popular because of his act of terrorism, but because he seemed to vindicate for the moment, the honour of Lala Lajpat Rai and through him of the nation. He became a symbol, the act was forgotten, the symbol remained", said Jawaharlal Nehru.

Bhagat Singh was born at village Banga in Tehsil Jaranwala, district Lyallpur (now in Pakistan) on September 27, 1907. At that time, his father, Kishan Singh and his uncle, Swaran Singh, were lodged in Central Jail, Lahore on the charge of revolutionary activities. Another uncle, Ajit Singh, was undergoing a sentence in Mandalay Jail, in Burma. Known for its revolutionary activities Bhagat Singh's family was intimately associated with freedom fighters such as Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhai Parmanand, Sufi Amba Parshad and Hans Raj. Punjab was seething with discontent at that time and there were strikes, agitations, and revolutionary meetings everywhere. During his school days Bhagat Singh was deeply moved and influenced by two events the Chadar Movement and

the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh at Amritsar. The stories of Indian revolutionaries abroad fascinated him but when he actually came into contact with Kartar Singh Sarabha and Rash Bihari Boss he was thrilled. Sarabha was hanged in 1916 but Bhagat Singh always kept his photograph in his pocket for inspiration. The bloodbath at Amritsar, however, roused his anger. General Dyer, the architect of the tragedy had boasted that he had fired 1650 rounds and not a single bullet was wasted. Not content with this massacre Dyer had issued the notorious 'Crawling Order' by which a large number of Amritsar citizens were made to crawl on their bellies along the streets of Amritsar. A heavy collective fine was imposed on the town for not cooperating with the British administration.

One morning instead of going to school Bhagat Singh boarded the train and went to Amritsar. There he visited the spot where the blood of the innocents was shed. He picked up soil from the earth rubbed it on his forehead.

He was just 12 at that time. In 1921, he left the school while in class IX in response to the clarion call given by Mahatma Gandhi to boycott all educational institutions. The movement was, however, withdrawn by Gandhiji but it created a problem for the admission of students. Consequently a new college called National College was started by Lala Lajpat Rai and Bhai Parmanand for such

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From the House of

SIMCO HAIR FIXER

In Search

While the word secularism does not occur anywhere in the Indian Constitution, barring in the Preamble, more or less from the day the Constitution was drafted, this word has been flung about without much thought being given to its true

Catholics and the Protestants accompanied by bloodshed and mutual killings. The Thirty Years War is a case in point.

Put another way, the idea of co-existence amongst the various denominations took several hundred years to evolve. One cannot go into detail but the point to be

intended, nor did it happen except in a marginal kind of way. It followed from this that India was to be a land where both Hindus and Muslims were to live together. Co-existence has thus been the accepted policy and secularism is the term that came to be used for such an approach. On the practi-

happening. It is distressing enough and even the chances of things getting worse are not all that remote. In plain words the communal situation can get worse. If it does, that would be tragic indeed and would mean a real setback both for the polity and the country. But, as I see it, the current situ-

cates a certain state of mind which may be described as obsessive not neurotic. This is a cause of disquiet.

That disquiet arises from the facts. One is the feeling of intensified consciousness of being Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh or a Christian. The issue of who belongs to which community arises when the basis of discussion and argument becomes the religious identity of the concerned individual. In a relaxed atmosphere, such an issue is not posed. Whether one belongs to this community or that is not at all relevant. But once a set of individuals become conscious of the fact that they belong to this or that particular community, it leads to a situation where others also start thinking in the same manner.

The basic change that has come about in the 80's, and this is the second aspect of the feeling of disquiet, is that all this time the majority community did not feel self-conscious or insecure in any way. It took it for granted that it was in the majority and therefore there was nothing to feel anxious about. But what happened in the 80's was that the majority community began to feel threatened. This had something to do with the rise of fundamentalism and terrorism in Punjab but that, in my opinion, is only a part of the explanation. The greater part of the explanation is the feeling of insecurity that has begun to pervade the majority community. Why so?

This feeling is the outcome partly of past history and partly of current developments. In a widely-discussed piece "The Crisis of Hinduism", I have called attention to the fact that not many people seem to have realised the significance of August 15, 1947. On that day not only did the British transfer power to India, on that day, for the first time, almost in a thousand years, power got transferred to the majority, in terms of a new mode of reckoning.



meaning. As an ideal, no one can quarrel with it. As a reality, it is far from being realised.

While the word secularism has a different connotation in Europe, we in India have chosen to interpret it differently. In Europe the Catholic Church wielded a good deal of political power at one time. With the rise of other forces, particularly towards the end of the Middle Ages, the power of the Church began to decline. It was in that context that the phrase "Render unto Caesar what is due to Caesar and render unto God what is due to God" became current. The idea was to draw a distinction between the religious sphere and the secular sphere.

Even after this ideal had been more or less accepted, tension between various Christian denominations did not disappear. On the contrary, for a couple of hundred years, there were intense and prolonged conflicts between the

noted is that the process of coming to terms with each other was a long-drawn out one. It was in this context that religion came to be looked upon as an individual's private concern. Whatever he believed in and whatever denomination he subscribed to were his personal affairs and were not to be allowed to intrude into his role as a citizen.

This is also the ideal towards which we in our country have tried to move. But we cannot succeed unless we understand our history during the last several hundred years and the way the two leading religions in the country have been, sometimes in a state of confrontation and sometimes in a state of co-existence. Nor have we understood the meaning of the partition of the country in 1947.

As is often and cogently argued, had India accepted the two nation theory, all Muslims would have migrated to Pakistan. That was not

cal plane, however, there have been difficulties, conflicts, even rioting and so on.

One has to refer only to two recent developments to see that these are the outcomes not of the manner in which the polity has evolved but a consequence of the crisis in which the country is caught. The reference here is to the Punjab situation since the early 80's and the Ram Janam Bhoomi — Babri Masjid situation in U.P. Without going into further details, I would like to submit that in both cases, the crisis is a manufactured one and not a real one. Which is to say that there was a problem in each case but the situations need not have taken the explosive form that they have done. Another way of looking at it would be that the polity today is more charged with communalism than it has been at any such stage since 1947.

Speaking for myself, I do not take too grim a view of what is

happening. It is distressing enough and even the chances of things getting worse are not all that remote. In plain words the communal situation can get worse. If it does, that would be tragic indeed and would mean a real setback both for the polity and the country. But, as I see it, the current situ-

ation requires to be seen as a manifestation of the current political crisis rather than an indication of a diseased polity.

What I am more worried about is what is usually referred to as Hindu resurgence. The majority

**Whether one belongs to this community or that
But once a set of individuals become conscious
belong to this or that particular community
where others also start thinking in the same manner.**

community which had a somewhat relaxed view of things all these decades feels threatened by the minorities. One can understand the minorities feeling threatened. But if the majority feels threatened, it is not only unnatural, it also indi-

During the pre-British days, the concept of majority or minority was notional. The character of a regime was determined by the denomination to which the ruler belonged. If the ruler was a Hindu, it was a Hindu kingdom. If the ruler was

Of Secularism

By Amrik Singh

Muslim, it was a Muslim kingdom and so on. The concept of 'one man, one vote' was introduced by the British into India and now it is here to stay. This single fact has transformed the situation in a qualitative way.

In our situation, it should have been clear beyond doubt that since the Hindus constituted the majority, and indeed an overwhelming majority (more than three-fourth of the total population), the political power had got transferred to them, so to speak. This was the meaning of August 15, 1947. But owing to the circumstances of the departure of the British, the establishment of Pakistan, continuing tension and conflicts with it and various other factors, the majority community has become more and more unsure of itself. This is reinforced by the history of conflict between Hinduism and Islam during the last thousand years or so. In particular, the Hindu psyche cannot live down the shame and humiliation of having been ruled by the Muslim rulers for several hundred years in large parts of the country.

But the question to raise now is if that history is relevant. Has the situation not undergone a basic change since August 15, 1947? Furthermore, now that the mode of reckoning is not the religious label of the ruler but the system of democratic governance, why should there be any cause for anxiety or insecurity? As if that was not enough the majority community has such overwhelming strength of numbers that were it to think of itself only in the denominational sense, India may be legitimately described as a Hindu country. But such a proposition has not been mooted seriously at any stage and therein lies both the problem and the challenge to the Indian polity.

In my opinion there are two basic weaknesses which need to be confronted. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that one

doubt and the caste factor today is not as powerful as it was at one time. Untouchability is a legal offence and there is not as much of discrimination against those of the lower castes as there used to be at one time.

In political terms, however, the caste is a much stronger reality today. This too is a part of the social and political process at work in the country. Not only has the communal consciousness got intensified, even caste consciousness has got intensified. Once the political crisis in which the country is caught is resolved to some extent, both types of consciousness would become weaker and that would be a step in the right direction. What we have to do therefore is to try to get out of the political crisis in which we find ourselves. If that comes to pass, as it should one of these days, while the other factors would not disappear they would certainly become less urgent and less troublesome on that account.

The second weakness which is in the nature of a challenge is the challenge of development. The fact of the matter is that the strategy of development evolved over the decades is in need of a drastic change. While the country has made some progress without question, almost half the population still lives below the poverty line. What is important is that this ugly feature of our economic and social life is fully and decisively overcome. That can happen only if the strategy of development is re-designed. This again is a part of the political crisis in which the country is caught. While it is recognised that we should remodel the strategy of development, those crucial decisions which are a condition precedent are not being taken.

Once those decisions are taken, the focus should be on development and development has its own logic. Development is possible, amongst other things, in conditions of social and political stability and involvement of those who are today below the poverty line. Then the attention would get transferred to those issues which need to be reinstated on the agenda of the country. In plain words the frame of argument needs to be changed from the communal to the economic plane.

This is not crude Marxism as some people might argue. Tension and conflict are unavoidable in any society. The question to ask is what is the tension about? It is when the issues of equity and fair distribution are given a back seat that other issues including the one of communal identity is come to the fore. Without attempting to argue too much about it, this much

needs to be underscored that the strategy of development needs to be remodelled. That would not take automatically care of other problems but it would be the starting point of the remodelling of the polity.

One final point maybe made clearly and emphatically. What is known as secularism can succeed

come only from the majority community.

The basic issue therefore is to look into the nature of the Hindu society, the historical and contemporary pressures upon it, the economic compulsions which motivate the vast majority of people and so many other factors which have a bearing upon the sit-

part of the majority can in turn impart a feeling of security to the minorities.

What is of overriding importance today, therefore, is to investigate those various factors which have bred the psychology of feeling threatened in the majority community. This feeling is not entirely confined to what is called the Hindi-speaking belt. It is to be found even in the neighbouring states of Gujarat and Maharashtra and to some extent in some of the more remote parts of the country as well. Its roots, however, and its basic strength come from the Hindi-speaking belt.

Is it a coincidence that it is these very parts of the country which are the most under-developed? The link between under-development and the feeling of insecurity, thus, is neither illogical nor so difficult to understand.

(Courtesy: Yojana)

Not many people seem to have realised the significance of August 15, 1947. On that day not only did the British transfer power to India, on that day, for the first time, almost in a thousand years, power got transferred to the majority, in terms of a new mode of reckoning.

in India only to the extent that the majority community believes in it. The minorities taking in its favour or insisting upon it has no meaning. To put it crudely, it would amount to some kind of a defensive reaction on their part. Indeed they talk of it only when they are under pressure. The pressure can

uation. In other words, there has to be a greater feeling of self-confidence on the part of the Hindu majority. This feeling will come only when the country is growing economically and no one is made to feel that he or she is being discriminated against. This feeling of self-confidence on the

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it is not at all relevant. s of the fact that they it leads to a situation same manner.

is a weakness and the other is a challenge. The weakness lies in the structure of the Hindu society and the damage caused by the continuing hold of the caste system. Some of its more odious aspects have been overcome no

Bhagat Singh

Continued from page 5

Saunders implemented the orders most vindictively, pounced upon the crowd like a hungry wolf. His first blow fell upon the umbrella of Lala Lajpat Rai the second on his shoulders and the third on his head. Scott himself took the lathi and started beating Lala Lajpat Rai mercilessly. Bhagat Singh saw all this and was about to react when Lalaji told him to remain non-violent.

In the mammoth meeting convened to protest against the visit of Simon Commission, Lala Lajpat Rai roared; 'I declare that the blows hurled at me would be the last nails in the coffin of the British rule in India'. Immediately after the meeting Lalaji was removed to the hospital where he died 18 days later on November 17, 1928. For Bhagat Singh it was a national insult to be avenged in the best traditions of blood for blood. In reply to Parliament question in the House of Commons tabled by Col. Wedgewood the Government disowned any responsibility whatsoever for the death of Lalaji and replied: 'No evidence had been produced to show that the death of Lajpat Rai was due to the blows received on that occasion'. Demands for public apology to the relations of Lalaji were also rejected.

On the night of December 10, 1928 the workers of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association held a meeting at Lahore. It was attended, amongst others, by Chandrashekhar Azad, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Durga Devi, Jai Gopal.

Bhagat Singh spoke with feelings and announced his programme of action. On Durga Bhabhi's proposal to select the man to finish Scott, Bhagat Singh was the first to volunteer: 'The task was entrusted to Bhagat Singh while Rajguru, Sukhdev, Azad and Jai Gopal were named to assist them. December 17, 1928 was fixed as the day to bundle him off. For one week Scott's movements were watched in and around his office situated in the Punjab Civil Sectt. On the appointed day they all went there and preached themselves outside the Secretariat. An Englishman came out. Jai Gopal mistook him as Scott and gave a signal. Rajguru fired at him while he had started his motor cycle, Saunders fell down without a shriek. Bhagat Singh rushed to him and fired four or five more bullets in Saunders' head to complete the task. A police constable saw all this but was too scared to intervene. It is only after they had left that he raised alarm. The revolutionaries escaped through the back door of the DAV College.

The following day a red leaflet was circulated along with the morning newspapers announcing that the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association has avenged the murder of Lala Lajpat Rai and has washed away the stigma of the national insult.

From DAV college Bhagat Singh went straight to a friend, got himself shaved, borrowed a woolen suit and a felt-hat and rushed to Durga Devi's house from where the three viz. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Durga Bhabhi with her three-year-old son, Sachi, went to Lahore railway station in a tonga, purchased first class tickets for Calcutta and left Lahore after throwing dust in the eyes of hundreds of policemen who had thronged the platform. In this attire of an Indian Sahib nobody could even distantly suspect him. It was at Calcutta that Bhagat got himself photographed in the felt-hat, the famous photograph by which he is so popularly known. He also attended the Congress Session here. Again it was in Calcutta that he decided to throw bomb in the Central Assembly in Delhi to make the deaf hear. He chose April 8, 1929 when the Public Safety Bill and the Trades Disputes Bill would be introduced. He had already discussed his plan with some top Bengal revolutionaries and set up a bomb factory at Agra, the headquarters of the Hindustan Republican Army. Between January and March 1929, Bhagat Singh journeyed between Agra and Delhi many times and fully acquainted himself with the environment from where the bombs were to be thrown.

On the morning of April 8, Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt got themselves photographed by Ram Nath of Kashmiri Gate. It is this photograph which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 18th April, 1928. Two days before the occur-

ence Bhagat Singh managed his entry in the Central Assembly to see the seating arrangement. The Government had decided to introduce the two Bills although the majority of the members were opposed to it. Visitors passes had been arranged for them through the recommendation of an Indian member. According to the statement of inspector Terry who arrested them after their voluntary surrender both of them were wearing khaki shirts and khaki shorts. So when Sir George Schuster informed the House that the Viceroy, by dint of special powers vested in him, had okayed the bills turned down by the House, Bhagat Singh and Dutt stood up, took a step forward the second bomb. 'Long Live Revolution' slogans were then raised. George Schuster was scared and took shelter under his desk. Bhagat Singh fired two bullets at this desk to further frighten him.

After the explosion they surrendered and got themselves arrested peacefully. Dutt was sent to Kotwali Thana while Bhagat Singh was detained at the Parliament Street police station. The hearing of the case started inside Delhi jail in the court of Poole. Here they started a hunger strike demanding their right be treated as prisoners of war and not as ordinary criminals. Their fast produced such a moral impact on the

crown witnesses that many of them refused to give evidence against Bhagat Singh and Dutt. On June 12, 1929 both of them were sentenced to transportation of life.

Revolution For Justice

Since the crown witness refused to give witnesses against the revolutionaries most of whom were already on hunger strike having won the hearts of even their opponents by their social work and noble conduct inside the jails, the Government promulgated an ordinance giving summary powers to a Special Tribunal to try the prisoners in the Lahore conspiracy case 'unhindered by any rule or legal procedure and undisturbed by any fear of appeal against the sentence'.

Asked by the court to define 'revolution' by the British magistrate who tried Bhagat Singh in the Lahore Conspiracy Case. Bhagat Singh replied: 'My revolution does not mean the cult of bomb or the pistol: By revolution we mean that the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice must change. By revolution we mean ultimate establishment of an order of society in which the sovereignty of the proletariat is recognised'. Bhagat Singh used the court as a media of his ideological publicity. Several

statements were issued from the court itself which, in effect resulted in their revolutionary propaganda at Government cost. This new technique considerably annoyed the police and the judges.

The Tribunal gave its judgement on October 7, 1930. Bhagat Singh and his two associates, Sukhdev and Shiv Ram Rajguru were sentenced to death. The execution took place on March 23, 1931. Sukhdev and Rajguru were also executed along with him. His last wish was: 'May I be reborn and serve my Motherland again'. Manmath Nath Gupta, in his biography of Bhagat Singh writes: "All the martyrs before and since Bhagat Singh have been hanged in the morning, but in the case of these three an exception was made and they were hanged at 7.15 p.m. in the evening of March 23. This was done to maintain secrecy, but the ordinary prisoners of the Jail came to know of it and they raised slogans. Fearing that some lurking scout of the revolutionaries might notice if the bodies were taken out of the jail gate, the high wall was breached at the back of the jail and the bodies were taken out for summary disposal to Ferozepur. There, under the cover of darkness a collective pyre was prepared and put to petrol. The English tommies who

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Meditating On Jap Sahib

By Baljit Kaur Tulsi

Jap is the name of the Holy Bani, recited and recorded by the tenth master, Guru Gobind Singh. It is a rare piece of Poetry, a wonderous creation esoteric in nature. The source of Jap is the supreme spiritual self of the great Guru. In deep meditation, when the spirit of the great Guru was one with the cosmic spirit, the holy poetry was caused and perceived in the spiritual vision. It flowed down like a mighty river, through the mysterious flood-gate of consciousness. It is an esoteric award full of blissful knowledge of the supreme effulgence. It is an extraordinary homage paid to the Almighty Lord in wonderful words.

Jap is Holy Bani, sacred Poetry. To understand and recapitulate the running spring of thoughts, one needs to get familiar with the mental, intellectual and spiritual self of the great Guru. Guru Gobind Singh was a born poet, a writer of great insight. An extraordinary biographer. A well known warrior. A religious leader of unusual spiritual powers. A leader with rare vision. A leader with great physical, practical and spiritual strength. A soldier with unusual endowments. A holy Saint. A leader of indomitable will. A leader of great moral values. A saint, who believed in the unity of humanity. A saint, who recognised only the Lord and none else. A great man of unusual humility and affection for his devotees. A guru who was loved and admired by friends and foes. A man, entirely selfless, who sacrificed everything at the altar of righteousness.

His spirit was in union with the cosmic spirit. He did not recognise any limit, of ca. 'e, creed, colour, birth, language, time or space. His spirit was absorbed in the limitless Lord. He was vested with supreme valour and indomitable courage. He was endowed with extraordinary enthusiasm. He held absolute faith in the Almighty Lord. He believed in the performances of Divine will. His complete self was overwhelmed with the spirit of sacrifice, holiness and unity. All his physical, mental, moral, intellectual and spiritual powers were directed to his goal.

The words with which the Jap Bani has been adorned are pious, holy, spiritual and full of faith. The words with great dignity and grace, appear from the castle invisible. They cross the portal of the ethereal experience. They assume the semblance of word-form when they come out of the spiritual flood-gate of consciousness. They are transmitted through petal-like lips of the great Guru. The glorified words are offered honourable spiritual throws. They are representatives, of the Almighty Lord, holding divine mandate for worship.

These words have not pledged

silence. They communicate the divine message. They are invested with the key of the invaluable treasure of divine—experiences of the great Guru. They apprise the seeker with divine insight, with self-confidence and reliance. When the words are uttered with love and devotion, the sound vibrations, carry the human spirit in the Holy Presence. The human soul experiences, the Infinite Power, the unlimited resources and divine effulgence of the Lord. In extreme humility and reverence, the human soul bows before the Greatness of the All Powerful. The experience thus gained, thrills the human self. The sensations are so deep and overpowering that the human self, consciousness, mental abilities and divine knowledge appears to be insignificant before the greatness of the Lord. The devotee's head bows before the exalted Lord in great veneration and admiration. At every divine vision, the head remains in solutation to hail the Supreme Lord.

The verses of the Jap Sahib have unique lilt. They have matchless rhyme and rhythm. Every verse offers a fresh lilt. The words march forth in dignity of being representatives of the Supreme Lord. They display the excellence, nobility and the magnitude of the status they hold. The manner in which the words clasp each other is extremely novel and original. The metrical current in the single-word-verse is so fast; that it sounds as if the words are engrossed in the divine-love-dance. The couplets with two or three words, pace up in ecstasy and lilt and transport the human spirit in blissful exaltation and veneration.

The verses are full of zeal, spirit and action. From the holy temple of Jap, they create holy vibrations of trust and faith. With the Holy powerful missiles of trust in God, they blow the sphere of doubt, indecision and illusion. They carry the spirit to the chamber of truth, awaken the sleeping faith, enlighten the consciousness and invigorate the human self to behold the greatness of the Lord.

On the wings of Holy-words, the human mind is taken to great elevated heights. Here the human mind visualises the supremacy of the great Lord as the fountain head of all the capabilities, potentialities and treasure house of divine bliss, eternal peace and source of revelation of all knowledge.

When the Holy words of Jap carry the human emotions to deep depths. The human consciousness realises the loving nature of the Lord. Most fearlessly he administers justice to the whole mankind, most dauntlessly he performs His divine actions. Most benevolent is His nature. Extremely great is His spirit. Extremely splendid is His beauty. Most magnificent is His manifest-

tation.

The theme of Jap Bani is certainly the Divine Lord. The Great God has no form, no figure, no shape, no colour, no caste, no creed, no mother, no father, no sister, no brother, no relations of any kind. He wears no garments. His place of residence is no palace, no hut, no nest, no den. He needs no form of transportation for His Divine performances. He belongs to no religion, not Hindu, not Muslim, not Sikh, not Christian. Lord is a unity, a whole, a totality, a completeness. He is the Alpha and Omega. He is the be-all and end-all. He is manifested in the entire creation. He is the wonderful eternal existence. None know His beginning, or His end. He is ever and ever present in the entire expanse of manifestation. It is the truth, undoubtful truth, entire truth and nothing but truth. He neither takes birth, nor is subject to annihilation. He is beyond the law of time and space. The constitution of time and space does not apply to Him. He is the divine authority Himself. He is the creator of the time dimension. He is the creator of limitless and universes. He is

the supreme commander. His discipline is compulsion. His command is demand. The vast oceans, the heavenly bodies, the canopy of sky, the powerful sun, the mighty time, the air and fire, the rains and rivers, the earth and mountains, the kings and mighty emperors, all kneel before His mandate.

The treasure of words used in the Jap Bani, is indeed great in magnitude. Guru Gobind Singh has left no divine dimension, which he has not verified. The Infinite lord has been described in different cantoes in different lilt and in different words. He has decorated Jap with innumerable words to glorify the Lord. He has embellished the Bani with extraordinary words to enlogize the Great One. At many places he has opposite words to sharpen the distinction of the divine operations. The Lord is formless, absolute, eternal, infinite, yet he is revealed in the entire creation. He is timeless, the mighty time is ruthless, brutal and cruel in causing death to dear ones, yet he is generous, benevolent, magnanimous and merciful. He is Absolute creator of the mighty time, yet His benevolent nature is revealed in His manifestation. He is transcendent, yet He is immanent. He is beyond com-

prehension yet He is the real existence of the very person who cannot understand Him.

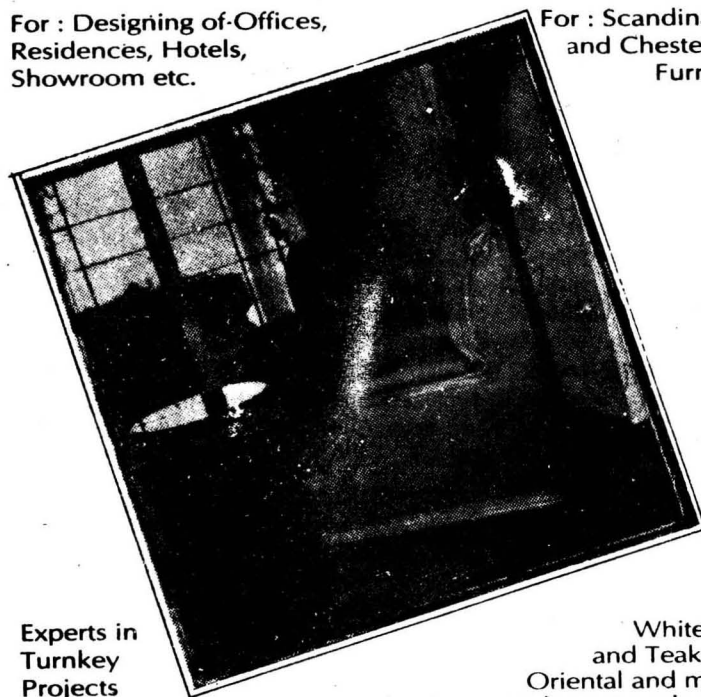
The first word, decorated on the sacred throne is Akale—the timeless. Human mind, human perception, and human knowledge is familiar with the word Kal-Time, the mighty Time and its reign on the entire creation. The human mind has seldom peeped or traversed beyond the dimension of Time. Transcending the limits of Time is the Creator, the Creator of the mighty Time. Time is so powerful and mighty, how powerful and mighty would be the Akale—the creator of the Time dimension? Guru Gobind Singh is hailing the All powerful, All mighty, Creator the lord, who is beyond Time.

Guru Gobind Singh has used words from different languages. At one place he has selected a Sanskrit word, immediately he has chosen a Persian or Arabic word, again he has opted for a Punjabi word and then again embraces Hindi or Sanskrit word. Indeed, he has broken limits of all languages. The language or word he thought was a vehicle of expression and not a barrier. Moreover, for him, word was not only a vehicle of thought and expression but it was a representative of divine performances and divine authority. ▢

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IMPACT

Punjab Remains Punjab

Continued from page 1

non grata. Akali leaders are intrigued by this remark of the Prime Minister. Does it mean that he will not talk to any Akali leader and thus foreclosed the issue? Can there be any peace in Punjab without active support and participation of the Akalis?

Mr Avtar Singh Malhotra, CPI leader, has demanded that all innocent detenus in Jodhpur should be released. He was against their release by instalments. Mr Malhotra has suggested that the proposed all-party meeting should be held at the State level as well as the national level and after panchayat elections, municipal elections should be held. The CPM is of the view that economic incentives alone will not solve the problem unless political initiative is taken. While welcoming the Prime Minister's call for all-party meeting, the CPM has said that it should not be a repetition of such meetings earlier with Opposition parties which did not yield any result.

The Punjab Janta party's general secretary, Mr Gian Chand, and the Vice-president, Mr Shiv Kanwar Sandhu, who were among the 14 activists of the party rounded up on the eve of the visit, described the visit as "purposeless and directionless". Mr Harbhajan Singh, former president of the Janta party in Punjab said that nothing concrete would come out of the visit as the Prime Minister addressed "captive audiences" from bullet proof boxes.

The reaction of the Opposition parties should be taken seriously as it is with these parties the Centre is going to enter into a dialogue. The Opposition parties and the people in general have come

to think that economic incentives, however desirable, are not a solution to the problem which is mainly

The Opposition parties and the people in general have come to think that economic incentives, however desirable, are not a solution to the problem which is mainly political and emotional.

political and emotional. Taking the political side first, the Prime Minister has himself "sabotaged" the political process by saying that there is no one of Sant Longowal's stature among the Akalis with whom they could talk. The message is clear that talking to lesser Akalis is not going to help. The Akalis may be badly fragmented but they cannot be ignored in any dialogue with the Centre. At the time of signing the accord with Sant Longowal, both Mr Barnala? Observers ask how can any settlement be reached by ignoring these three Akali leaders and add that the Prime Minister by delaying the implementation of the accord has added the militants as a party by holding secret parleys with them through his minions.

Further, can the accord be implemented by ignoring the claims of Haryana as regards water and territorial distribution particularly when Mr Devi Lal is the Chief Minister of that State. The critics of the Prime Minister say that nothing is going to come out of the proposed all-party meeting as he is not sincere in solving the problem and the delay is making it more complicated. Further, the Prime Minister will not dare to take any big initiative to cut the Gordian knot on the eve of the general elections in the country.

Independent observers believe that the problem is beyond economic and political concessions. The problem has now become psychological and emotional in the sense that alienation against the security forces in the State is growing, particularly in the rural areas and there is loss of faith in the credibility of the Centre. This loss of faith is not confined to the Sikhs only. In an editorial after the visit of the Prime Minister, Mr Virender, editor of *Partap* an Urdu daily of Punjab, which has come to be regarded as the spokesman of the Hindus, has appealed to the Governor to stop repeating that the law and order situation has improved because the day after he makes such assertions, heinous

crimes like the killing of innocent persons at Sirhind are committed by the terrorists. The law and order situation had, in fact deteriorated, he alleged. Describing the Prime Minister's visit as "one day show" Mr Virender said that the people of the country were wrong in thinking that the Punjab problem is a Sikh problem only. The Centre released Jodhpur detenus on the eve of the Prime Minister's visit to please the Sikh and the Akalis. The detenus could have been released two years earlier also, Mr Virender added. The editorial predicted that nothing would come out of the all-party meeting to be called by the Prime Minister as the Governor has called such meetings several times without any result. The reason was the growing differences between the Hindus and the Sikhs of Punjab and the Hindus' opposition to the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

But what Mr Virender forgot to mention was that it is not only the Hindus who have migrated from the border districts of Punjab. Lately, many Sikh families have also migrated from these areas to safer places. Reports coming in from Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts paint a grim picture of the sit-

uation there. According to these reports, it is the writ of the terrorists which prevails there who are killing people and extorting ransom money from them. The latest *modus operandi* of the terrorists is to kidnap members of well-to-do families and demand ransom money. The families pay the money and do not report the matter to the police out of fear of reprisal. Even government officials and security personnel are not being spared.

All these incidents are taking place despite the success of Operation Black Thunder. During the 19 months of the Akali rule, the number of innocent persons killed was 687 which rose to 1,820 in almost the same number of days during the President's rule. Similarly, the number of terrorists killed rose from 138 to 470 and that of terrorists arrested from 2,800 to 4,080. The government claims that this is because of the determined and aggressive policy being pursued by it and yet the situation is not improving.

Next to terrorism, corruption in the police and the administration is the major problem being faced by the government. Corruption has become so rampant that the Chief

Secretary had to issue a circular detaining dos and donts for government officials. The Governor holds periodic meetings with college students at Raj Bhavan and they have told him how the police harasses them by first arresting them under the National Security Act and later demand "release" money from their parents. All this and other factors aggravate the emotional problem. In this connection, the Sikhs in general have noted the Prime Minister's silence about the Bidar incident during his three speeches in Punjab. The Prime Minister announced on September 28 that he was sending the Home Minister and other Congress leaders to Bidar but this announcement came 14 days after the bloody incidents in which six Sikh students were killed and many injured reminding Sikhs of the carnage in Delhi in 1984.

For a change, willy nilly Door-darshan made a better job than the print media. TV viewers could hear an old Sikh farmer telling the Prime Minister near Jaito: "Gandhi Sahib the people are hungry for love. You give them love and they will keep you as Prime Minister for life". That probably sums up the situation in Punjab.

Bhagat Singh

Continued from page 8

brought the bodies from Lahore, drank and danced while the flames of the fire rent the sky with the silent slogans of the revolution that was born on the ashes of the revolutionaries. After some time, the half burnt bodies were thrown in the river Sutlej. When the police party left, the villagers came to, know about dead bodies. They salvaged the bodies from the river, made a pyre and cremated them properly according to their own rites". A big procession was taken out in Lahore that day.

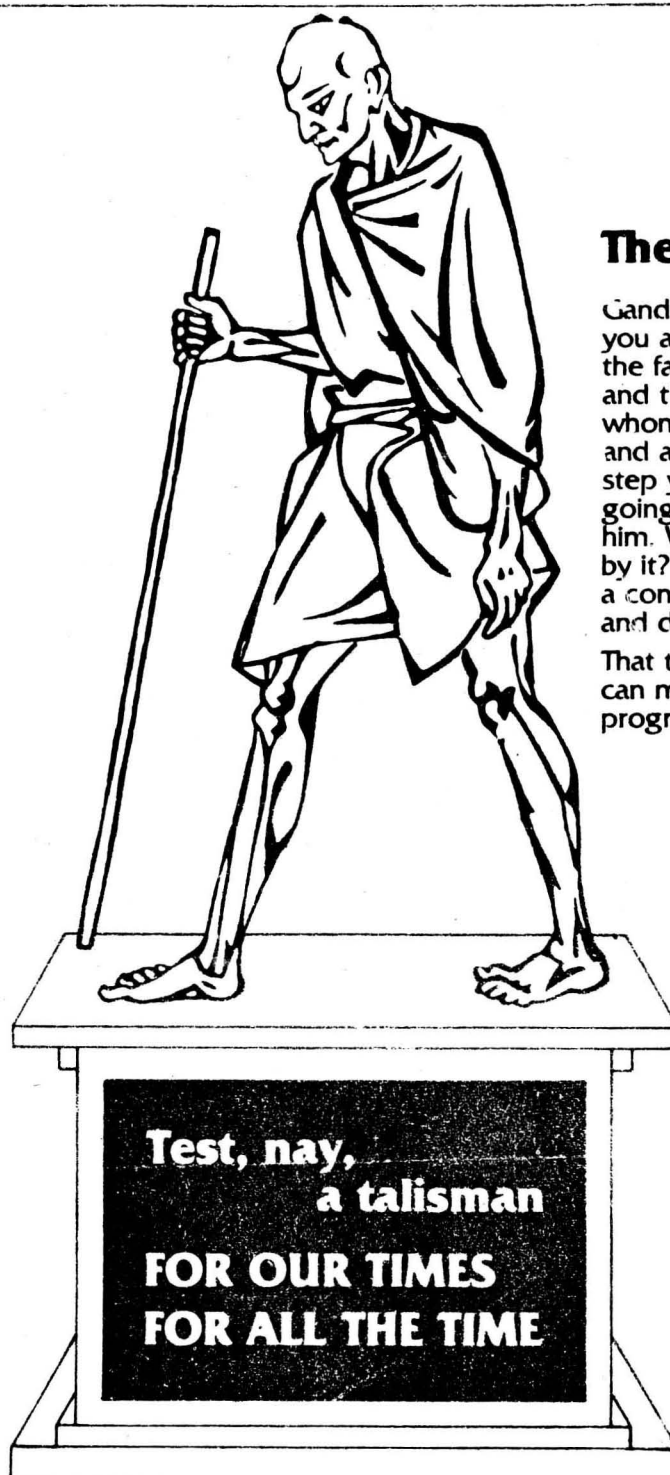
Every year on March 23 a Sha-heedi Divas is observed and martyrs remembered.

Bhagat Singh was not a man he was a movement.

The Acid Test

Gandhiji said: "Whenever you are in doubt... Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny?"

That test alone, he felt, can make our plans and programmes meaningful.



day: 88 350

Marriages And Families

By Bibhu Prasad Mohapatra

Burning brides, burnt widows, harassed wives and so many socio-familial problems make big headlines in daily newspapers. We have to know a little about marriages and families that exist in our widely divergent social customs to understand and explore ways to put a stop to these human atrocities.

'Family is defined by a social assignment of rights of privileges and a social determination of the rolls of spouses, parents, child, and siblings'. (Hunter and Whitten). Public recognition and acceptance of the relationship between men and women constitutes marriage.

Family and marriage may take one of the number of forms that have evolved in response to basic biological needs and challenge posed by the socio-cultural environment.

Writing on the types of marriages that prevailed in ancient India, Dr. Romila Thapar writes that eight forms of marriage were acknowledged in the Dharmasatras, four for high castes and four for low castes.

Eight Types

When a father gifts his daughter to learned man of good character, it is called 'brahma' marriage. If it is a priest to whom the daughter is gifted it is called 'daiva' marriage. When a prospective son-in-law makes the gift of a bull and a cow to the girls' father before receiving her as gift it is called 'arsha' marriage. Marriage by purchase is called 'gandharva'. When a father gifts his daughter to a monk after duly honouring him it is called 'prajapatya'. Marriage by abduction is called 'rakshasa' and by seduction or intoxication is called 'paisacha'.

Among the tribes of India, according to the ethnography collected to date, we may list eight different types of marriages. (1) Probationary marriage (found among Kuki tribe when a young man is allowed to stay with the girl of his choice in her father's house for weeks together. Later, if they find each other compatible they marry. Otherwise he pays compensation to the girls' father and walks out (No stigma attached). (2) Marriage by capture found among Nagas and Bhil tribes of central India. (3) Marriage by trial (Bhills), it is recognition of personal courage bravery as highly desirable traits in human beings. (4) Marriage by purchases or bride price is practised all over tribal India, especially among "Ho". Payment of bride price is supposed to be a symbolic gesture of the utility of women in the society. (5) Marriage by service—due to the demand of very high bride price some tribes like Gonds and

Baigas use a novel method to meet the price. They offer their services to the would be father-in-law as a suitor—servant and after a stipulated period marry the girl of his choice. (6) Marriage by exchange also is widely practised. It serves the purpose of avoiding high bride price. (7) Marriage by mutual consent and elopement is an universal phenomenon. (8) Marriage by inheritance found among Sema Nagas—a son marries all his father's widows other than his mother. The reason may be that property is not sub-divided. In northern middle India often brother inherits his deceased brother's widow.

The bonds of marriages and the common interest and affection created by children of the marriage provide channels for emotional, social, political and economic cooperation that help to organise a larger communities.

Various Forms

Exogamy requires people to marry outside their own group, to establish ties with other groups, and to extend rights and responsibility to them.

Endogamy requires people to marry within a defined group and reinforce reactivate and continue group ties.

Cross cousin marriages: maintain the relationship between two groups through time and can keep economic, social and political privileges within the control of two inter marrying families. Example—Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Kerala.

Polygamy: It refers to the form of marriage where there are provision for one person to have more than one spouse. In case of Polygamy—a man can have several wives. This arrangement often gives economic advantage, adds to the family prestige and is highly efficient for procreation, where is Polyandry is better designed for

certain other areas. Sororate is the arrangement where a woman has to marry one's deceased sister's husband. Levirate is the practice of marrying one deceased brother's wife. Monogamy: is the most accepted form of marriage. Monogamous marriages serve the group by making more marriages possible. Family grouping formed by various kinds of marriages are influenced where the marriage partners reside after the event. When the young couple move into the residence of the groom's father, they take Virilocal residence. In case of Patrilocal residence, the young couple moves in with the groom's father's extended kin group. When the couple moves into residence with the bride's family it is Uxorilocal (if no other member of the mother's family stay there), Matrilocal if mother's kin group is also in residence. In

case of Neelocal residence couples are expected to establish their own new independent residences.

Family Types

There can be basically two kinds of families. Nuclear and Composite. Nuclear family is formed by parents and their children. A composite family can be of several types. The family grouping of two or more married couples and their children is termed as extended family. The horizontal extended family or joint family is a household of two siblings and their respective spouses and children. The vertical extended family is one in which parents, some of their married children, and some of their grandchildren are in residence together.

The importance of the family in personality development can be classified under four categories: (1) The first learning (socialisation) is restricted to family. (2) Childhood experiences of certain things, so much so that later in life he is interested in some things and neglect others. (3) The long period of association within the family gives necessary time for moulding the child according to the family pattern. (4) The social class and other characteristic of child family will limit the kind of outside asso-

ciation he will have.

The actual human nature in child—his language, food habits, prejudices and other attitudes, marriage in family behaviour, occupation and other social patterns are the result of cultural conditioning within the framework of the above four factors.

The basic concepts which have made possible the continuance of family through ages is called familism. The essential elements of familism are (1) Members of the family work together for the attainment of family goals. (2) The resources of the family are available to any member when and if he wants it. (3) The family as a whole comes to the assistance of any member if one is in trouble with the outsiders. (4) Attention is given in family to newly married family units.

Familism is much more prevalent in agriculture societies than in urban industrial societies. Historically one could trace the beginning of the decline of familism to the industrial revolution. Thereafter individuals and families had to migrate to the source of work, and family members had to spend much of their time away from the family group. This restored individualism which is just the opposite of familism. Development of manufacturing industries led to the growth of cities, and progressive

decline in familism.

The family in recent times has been undergoing radical modification and it has been occurring almost every country. Changes in the economic function of the family include the transfer of both production and consumption of goods to outside agencies. Increase in bakeries, commercial corners, restaurants, labour saving appliances etc. contribute to the factor.

Protection and security is provided to a family today by policeman, fireman, insurance companies etc. and not by the family. Education of children, though it still is a family function is on a much reduced scale. Some people point to TV and Radio as a return of recreation to the home, but probably these gadgets actually decrease the interpersonal communication within the family. In a way commercial recreation has invaded into exclusive family territories.

Certain social processes like industrialisation, organisation, secularisation and mobility have undermined the stability of social relationships including family. But in spite of all these families still retain its intrinsic functions, such as emotional security, transmission of cultural tradition and customs to the next generation.

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What Does Palestine Mean to India?

By Ludwina A. Joseph

It is a pity that in India we have the sorry spectacle of a right policy being pursued for all the wrong reasons. As far as Palestine is concerned we have been manipulated into a corner so afraid are we of offending Arab sensitivities—when it is in fact the justness of the Palestinian cause that should be motivating us.

The Palestine Enigma

What does Palestine actually mean to the average educated Indian? Not a lot. Particularly not to a youth fed on a diet of Western pulp fiction: witness the novels of Leon Uris carrying as they do an idealised and romanticised version of Israel, of the shining virtues of its first Premier David Ben-Gurion, and of the lofty tenets of the early Zionist pioneers who made the desert bloom. Which young person could remain unmoved by 'Exodus' or by the tribulations of a much-persecuted race in post-war Germany: 'Armageddon', and the desperation in the Warsaw ghettos: 'Mila 18'. In comparison what novels do we have on Palestine to combat such insidious propaganda? The problem with the Palestinians is that they expect the justness of their cause to be self-evident. When asked they refer to what Mahatma Gandhi wrote on the subject as if Gandhi's writings were the staple literary diet of young Indians!

I remember as a young teenager being influenced by 'Exodus', of spouting a lot of romantic rubbish about the justice owing to the Jews and the unfairness of the Arabs, and of long and heated arguments with my more enlightened father, and of ultimately realising that, however, sorry one felt for a persecuted people they had no business taking away someone else's land and never mind how cherished that land might be to them in memory and prayer. If every people began claiming historical and legendary right to ancient homelands we would have a Red Indian America or an Aboriginal Australia, but which court of law would uphold the rights of those races, however legitimate they might be?

Palestine Was Wronged

The Palestinians were wronged ever since the Balfour declaration was issued in 1917. This infamous declaration enabled the Jews to carve out a country for themselves in land which belonged to the Palestinians and which was being occupied and had for centuries been occupied by Arabs. For the Palestinians it was shocking, immoral, daylight robbery but for the Jews it was a triumphant culmination of the *raison d'être* of the entire Zionist movement. It was not as if the long-suffering Jews did not merit

world assistance and sympathy for the discrimination, persecution and selective genocide practised through the ages by both eastern and western Europe and which reached a ghastly crescendo in Hitler's Germany. They did. But not at the expense of others. And stealing someone else's land was hardly an answer.

Indian Policy

In 1917 when the West looked on and mostly applauded, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi—always the conscience-keeper of the nation—was applied and said so. He felt strongly for the outraged Palestinians. How wonderful it would be to claim that our Middle Eastern policy derived from Gandhian ideals. In fact it has more to do with currying favour with the Arab lobby and ensuring their continued goodwill to safeguard Indian strategic and commercial interests in West Asia.

But why is India not contributing its mite to Middle Eastern harmony considering our recent maturity to regional power status and intense busyboddiness in sorting out other nation's affairs (eg. Afghanistan, Kampuchea, South Africa: dismantling apartheid, Iran-Iraq, Namibia et al)? In fact in recent years we have had very little to offer on Palestine except the usual platitudes, barring the trivial problem of whether or not India should play tennis with Israel. Have we been intimidated by Jordan and Syria to keep out of it? It is strange that New Delhi, a staunch Arab ally and NAM stalwart, should have no part to play in the proposed Middle East peace conference. Palestine needs India's support (moral and otherwise) now more than ever.

The Israeli Aggression

The Palestinians have shown the world that they can no longer be ignored or fobbed off as incapable of being masters of their own destiny. They have finally come into their own with the eight month old uprising (Intifadeh) in the Occupied Territories. Brutally repressed by the Israelis, the uprising has had the happy effect of shaking both the West and the Arabs out of their stupor into doing something concrete. Never before have so many West Asian peace plans been bandied about or so many Arab leaders been scrambling to get in on the action and corner some of the glory. If only the Israelis would be reasonable about vacating the territories illegally acquired by them and return to the borders chalked out by the United Nations Partition Resolution of 1947 we might still have a Palestine.

The most cataclysmic effect of the Intifadeh has been the rapid transformation of the image of the Israelis in Western newspapers

It did not need "p.r." or propaganda or an Arab version of Leon Uris to convince the world that what the Israelis were doing was wrong. If it makes the West question and rethink policy or pressure the Israelis, the Intifadeh would have served a purpose. Perhaps India had better start pushing.

that glossed over the 1982 Sabra and Chatila massacres of Palestinian refugees but are unable now to stomach the harsh truth of armed Israeli soldiers beating and otherwise brutalising unarmed Palestinians. The Israeli image has taken a severe drubbing and they

are now seen as perpetrators of cruelties on women and children on TV sets by dumbfounded Western audiences who cannot quite accept the reversal of roles or reconcile it with what they have been led to believe all their lives. Finally, it did not need "p.r." or propaganda or an Arab version of Leon Uris to convince the world that what the Israelis were doing was wrong. If it makes the West question and rethink policy or pressure the Israelis, the Intifadeh would have served a purpose. Perhaps India had better start pushing.



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